



PREVENTION

MANAGEMENT

Solvent- Contaminated Shop Towels, Wipes, and Other Materials

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources • Waste Management Program • PUBL
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This fact sheet is for businesses that use shop towels, sorbent clothes, cleaning rags, pads, socks, mats, or wipes. Wipes are similar to rags except they are less durable, have a shorter life, can be made of non-textile materials such as launderable paper or other products, and are sometimes disposable. This fact sheet considers all these items "solvent contaminated rags or wipes" and applies to other solvent contaminated items that can be reused. This fact sheet does not refer to material like solvent contaminated soil, kitty litter, etc.

ARE MY SOLVENT CONTAMINATED RAGS OR WIPES HAZARDOUS WASTE?

HAZARDOUS

If you do not reuse your solvent contaminated rags or wipes, DNR regulates them as hazardous waste if they are a listed hazardous waste, or they exhibit one or more hazardous characteristic such as ignitability or toxicity.



NOT HAZARDOUS

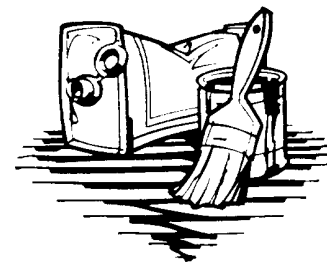
If you are able to reuse your solvent contaminated rags or wipes, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will not require you to manage them as solid or hazardous waste provided they are managed in an environmentally safe manner as described below.

HOW SHOULD I MANAGE MY SOLVENT CONTAMINATED RAGS OR WIPES IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SAFE MANNER?

- ◆ Solvent contaminated rags or wipes should not be dripping with solvent. Liquids in containers of solvent contaminated rags or wipes may cause the material to be regulated as hazardous waste. You should prevent liquids from accumulating in the containers.
- ◆ Store solvent contaminated rags or wipes in a covered container away from sources of ignition. Containers should be clearly labeled, "Dirty Solvent Rags Only."
- ◆ Do not place different types of solvent contaminated material (e.g., rags and wipes) into the same container.

- ◆ Do not put other waste in a container of solvent contaminated rags or wipes.
- ◆ Handle solvent contaminated rags or wipes using a legitimate management practice such as laundering. You should have a contractual agreement for this service.

If you fail to follow these criteria, you will have to manage your solvent contaminated rags or wipes as a solid, and possibly hazardous waste.



WHAT ARE ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES?

Centrifuging solvent contaminated rags or wipes is acceptable. So is wringing them out, as long as they can be reused! Once you centrifuge your rags or wipes, put them into a container and manage them as follows:

- ◆ Cloth wipes can be sent to a laundry for cleaning and re-use.
- ◆ Certain non-textile wipes can be sent to a dry cleaner and then returned for reuse.
- ◆ Disposable wipes can be baled and disposed of through fuel blending.

Any residue or solvent waste generated from the management of these materials is a solid waste and you must determine if it is hazardous waste and manage it appropriately. Your company can accumulate your rags for centrifuging at a single location owned by your company provided you follow the steps for environmental safety listed in this fact sheet.

DO I NEED SPECIAL PERMISSION TO MANAGE SOLVENT CONTAMINATED RAGS OR WIPES?

DNR does not require a license for centrifuging to remove solvent from rags or wipes if this activity is done at either the generation location or the laundry/dry cleaning facility where the rags or wipes are sent to be cleaned. Alternatives to centrifuging will be considered by the Department on a case by case basis. You should contact your local DNR office for approval.

A commercial off-site collection facility that plans to centrifuge solvent contaminated wipes or mats (non-textile materials) before sending them elsewhere to be laundered, reused, or burned may need a solid waste processing license or a hazardous waste operating license. Any facility with a discharge to a sanitary sewer should contact the local sewage treatment plant and DNR's Bureau of Watershed Management to determine if the local wastewater treatment facility would be able to accept a wastewater discharge from their laundry and whether any pre-treatment requirements apply. The Department's Bureau of Air Management should be contacted to determine if air management regulations apply.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TRANSPORTING THESE SOLVENT CONTAMINATED, REUSABLE RAGS, OR WIPES?

If these materials will be laundered and reused (e.g., laundering), DNR will not require a



transportation license provided environmentally safe management practices are used before and during transport. Transporting rags and wipes to facilities where they will not be reclaimed (e.g., a commercial centrifuge, a facility where they are prepared for fuel blending, or where they are actually burned) requires a solid waste and sometimes a hazardous waste transportation license. DOT shipping requirements for hazardous materials must be followed if applicable.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN THE SOLVENT CONTAMINATED RAGS OR WIPES ARE NO LONGER REUSABLE?

Burning for Energy Recovery

Solvent contaminated rags or wipes that are no longer reusable may be centrifuged and managed as solid waste, provided they are legitimately burned for energy recovery in a solid waste to energy combustion unit. When burned, regulations for rags and wipes become more of a concern for the operator of the burner. DNR requires you to use a licensed solid waste transporter (or hazardous waste transporter, if the rags or wipes are hazardous waste) and a bill of lading to track bales to their fuel blending location.

Disposal in a Landfill

The Department does not recommend disposal of solvent contaminated rags or wipes in a solid waste landfill. The Department prefers burning for energy recovery. Solvent contaminated rags or wipes that are not centrifuged and burned for energy recovery are solid waste and possibly hazardous. You must determine whether or not they are hazardous waste and manage them appropriately. If the solvent contaminated rags or wipes to be disposed of are hazardous waste, you must send them to a licensed hazardous waste facility using a license hazardous waste transporter. Many generators choose to avoid solid waste landfill disposal due to liability concerns.

Questions?

Call your DNR Regional waste management program (see attached map) if you have additional questions or consult the NR 500 and 600 series, Wisconsin Administrative Code. Other publications available from DNR include: Non-Landfill Options for Management of Spent Oil Sorbent Materials (PUBL-SW-382-96), Multiple-Use and Combustible Sorbent Manufacturers and Suppliers (PUBL-SW-381-96). Call 608/266-2111 for copies or contact your DNR Region's recycling specialist. You may also want to check on DNR's web site at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us> or contact your regional waste management program or DNR's Bureau of Cooperative Environmental Assistance at 608/267-9700 for a list of other publications that might be of interest.

Copies of Wisconsin statutes and administrative rules can be purchased from Wisconsin Department of Administration, Document Sales and Distribution, P.O. Box 7840, Madison, WI 53707-7840 or call 608/266-3358. Wisconsin State statutes and some administrative rules are also on the Revisor of Statutes Bureau's world wide web site: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/stats.html>.

***Disclaimer:** This fact sheet is not intended as a substitute for the statutes and rules that apply. Rather, it is a brief summary of the topic. Please consult Wisconsin's statutes and administrative rules for detailed information.*

Note: DNR provides equal opportunity in employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. This document is available in alternative format upon request. Call the Bureau of Waste Management at 608/266-2111 for information about alternative formats.

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